

# Army Combat Uniform (ACU) Briefing



Prepared 18 Jan 06  
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# References

- ◆ ACU Policy Published by SGM Katrina Easley from ALARACT.
- ◆ AR 670-1 has not been updated as of today.



# Brief History

- ◆ On June 14, 2004, fielding of the new ACU was announced
- ◆ MILPER message announced new wear policy and amendments to AR 670-1
- ◆ Soldiers who deploy are being issued the ACU (since Feb 05) and ACU pattern items (including IBAS)



# SMA Thoughts

- ◆ “ If we as NCOs enforce the standards and intent of the regulation, the savings gained by not sewing on patches or laundering at dry-cleaners should more than make up for the purchase and replacement costs. I look to you to help our Soldiers embrace this Warrior focus, while maintaining the clean appearance our Army is renowned for.” - SMA Kenneth O. Preston



# ACU/Boot Phase In

- ◆ THE ACU/BOOTS MANDATORY POSSESSION DATES (MPD) ARE AS FOLLOWS:
- ◆ 2 EACH ACU BY 1 MAY 07 (AC, USAR & ARNG)
- ◆ 4 EACH ACU BY 1 MAY 08 (AC, USAR & ARNG)
- ◆ 4 EACH ACU BY APR 2010 (ROTC)
- ◆ 1 EACH ARMY COMBAT BOOT (TEMPERATE WEATHER) OR ARMY COMBAT BOOT (HOT WEATHER) BY 1 MAY 07 (AC, USAR & ARNG)
- ◆ 1 EACH ARMY COMBAT BOOT (TEMPERATE WEATHER) AND 1 EACH ARMY COMBAT BOOT (HOT WEATHER) BY 1 MAY 08 (AC, USAR & ARNG)
- ◆ 1 EACH ARMY COMBAT BOOT (TEMPERATE WEATHER) AND 1 EACH ARMY COMBAT BOOT (HOT WEATHER) BY APR 2010 (ROTC)



# The ACU Ensemble

- ◆ ACU coat / trousers
- ◆ ACU patrol cap
- ◆ Hot weather boots (desert tan, suede boots)
- ◆ 2 inch riggers belt (tan or black authorized)
- ◆ Moisture wicking t-shirts (tan)
- ◆ Velcro full color flag, nametapes, rank, organizational patches (authorized in ACU pattern or OD)

## The Army Combat Uniform





ACU worn with  
the Patrol Cap

Moisture wicking tan  
T-shirt

Mandarin collar worn in  
the down position

Velcro backed U.S. ARMY  
and last name tape

Elbow pouch with Velcro closure for internal  
elbow pad inserts

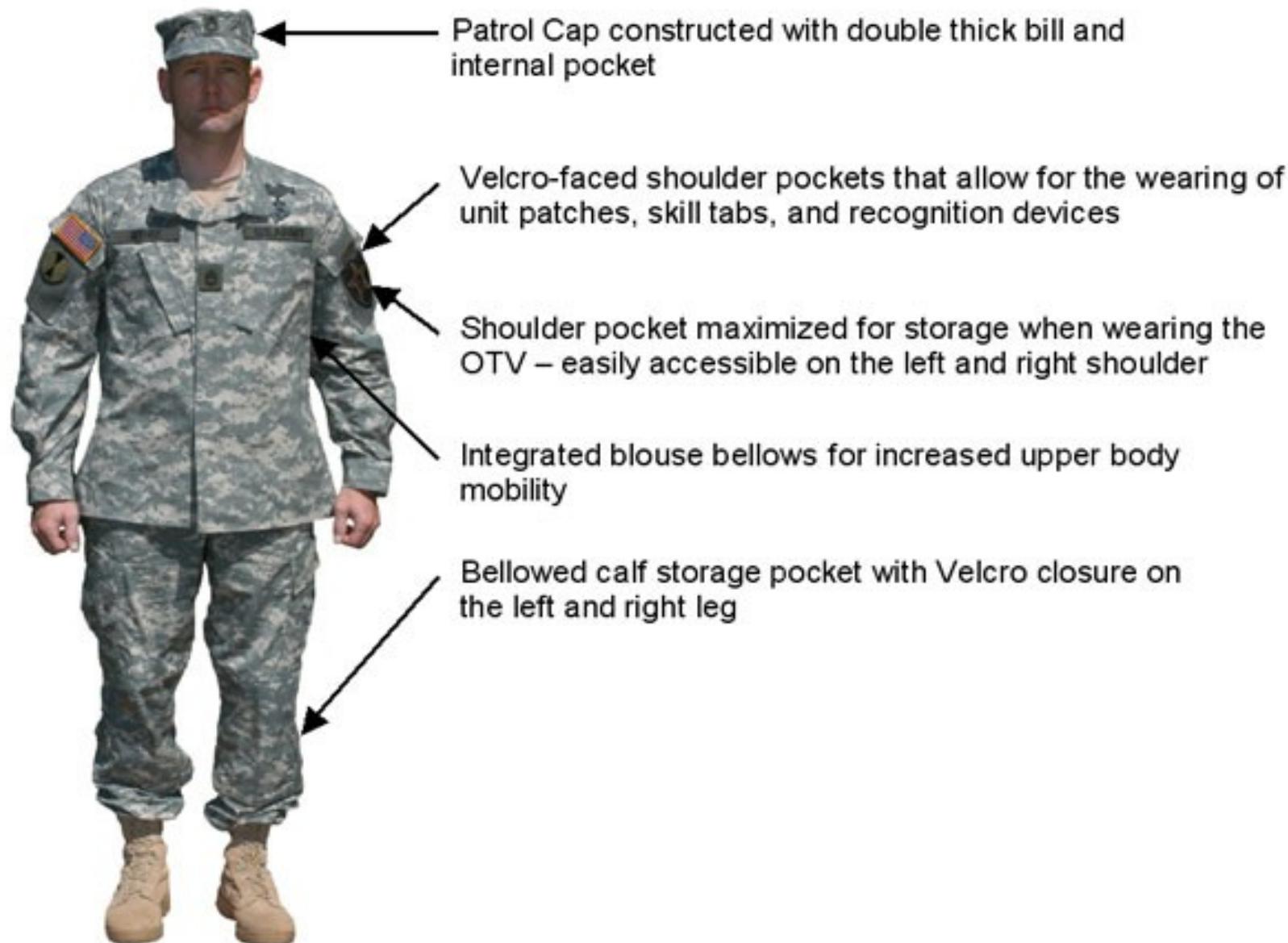
Zippered front closure, reinforced with Velcro  
which provides a smooth surface when worn  
with the OTV

Knee pouch with Velcro closure for internal  
knee pad inserts

Leg cuff with front closure tie, which allows more  
comfortable closure on the outside of the boot collar



## The Army Combat Uniform



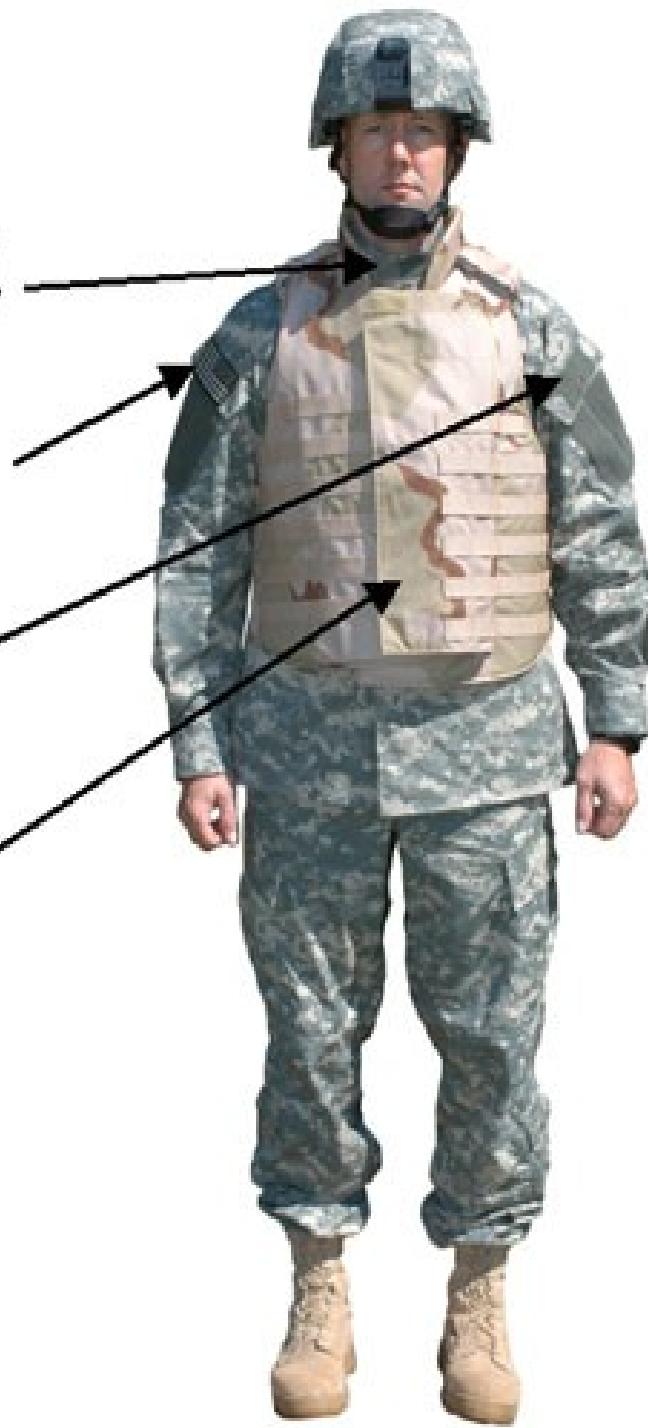


Mandarin collar worn in the up position to keep out debris and protect the neck when wearing the OTV

Infrared (IR) feedback American Flag that provides both day and night recognition for friend or foe identification

Permanent IR feedback squares affixed to each shoulder for nighttime identification

ACU design is maximized for use with the OTV, with easy access pockets and maximized storage space





# Items Authorized with the ACU

- ♦ Black Beret
- ♦ ACU sun (boonie) hat
- ♦ Socks (black or green, cushion sole)
- ♦ Cold Weather Field Jacket (Woodland Pattern or ACU Pattern)
- ♦ Gore-Tex parka and pants (Woodland Pattern or ACU Pattern)
- ♦ ACU Fleece (black or loden green)
- ♦ Gloves- SOLDIERS MAY WEAR GLOVES WITH THE ACU WITHOUT THE COLD WEATHER OUTER GARMENTS (I.E., GORETEX JACKET OR FIELD JACKET, ETC.)
- ♦ T-shirt (brown, cotton and Tan moisture wicking)
- ♦ Combat and Special Skill Badges (pin on subdued [optional] 5 max)
- ♦ Headgear insignia (Sew-on or Pin-on)
- ♦ SSI-FWTS (combat patch)
- ♦ Hydration systems, and organizational clothing and equipment (as determined by the commander)



# Exceptions

- ◆ During the phase in process, there will be a mix of camouflage pattern items, such as wearing the ACU's with a woodland Gore-Tex parka. The Phase-in period for the ACU universal camouflage pattern is **MAY 05 to MAY 08**.
- ◆ **The Commander can authorize** a mix of DCU and Woodland items until the ACU pattern is completely phased in to all equipment systems



# Wash and Wear Policy

- ◆ **“SOLDIERS WILL NOT STARCH THE ARMY COMBAT UNIFORM UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. THE USE OF STARCH, SIZING, AND ANY PROCESS THAT INVOLVES DRY-CLEANING OR A STEAM PRESS WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT THE TREATMENTS AND DURABILITY OF THE UNIFORM AND IS NOT AUTHORIZED”**
  - -ACU MILPER MESSAGE, AMENDMENT TO AR 670-1

- ◆ Designed to be worn under body armor (IBAS)
- ◆ Will be worn by soldiers all year round except when prohibited by the order of the commander
- ◆ The ACU may be worn off post unless prohibited by the commander
- ◆ The ACU will not be worn while on commercial travel unless previously authorized under AR 670-1, paragraph 1-10C.
- ◆ Soldiers will not wear the ACU at any off-post establishments that primarily sell alcohol. In off-post establishments where both alcohol and food are sold, soldiers may wear their ACU's only if their activities do not center on drinking.
- ◆ ACU's are not appropriate attire for social or official functions off military installations such as funerals, memorial services, weddings, political events, patriotic ceremonies, etc. Sewn on rank is only authorized on the ACU Patrol Cap, ACU Boonie Hat, and Kevlar Camouflage cover.
- ◆ The ACU is meant to fit loosely and comfortably. Alterations to hinder this appearance are not authorized.



# Wear of the ACU Coat / Trousers

- ◆ THE COAT IS WORN HOOK AND LOOPED AND ZIPPED
- ◆ THE COAT HAS HOOK AND LOOP FASTNERS FOR WEARING THE U.S. FLAG INSIGNIA,
- ◆ SKILL TABS, SHOULDER SLEEVE INSIGNIA, SHOULDER SLEEVE INSIGNIA - FORMER WARTIME SERVICE, RANK, U.S. ARMY TAPE, AND NAME TAPE.
- ◆ THE COAT HAS A ZIPPERED FRONT CLOSURE, TILTED CHEST POCKETS WITH HOOK AND LOOPED CLOSURE, HOOK AND LOOPED SLEEVE CUFF CLOSURE (WHICH MUST BE CLOSED AT ALL TIMES), INTEGRATED BLOUSE BELLOWS FOR INCREASED UPPER BODY MOBILITY, AND SHOULDER POCKETS WITH HOOK AND LOOP.
- ◆ THE MANDARIN COLLAR WILL BE NORMALLY WORN IN THE DOWN POSITION.
- ◆ SOLDIERS ARE AUTHORIZED TO WEAR THE MANDARIN COLLAR IN THE UP POSITION WHEN WEARING BODY ARMOR OR WHEN WEATHER CONDITIONS DICTATE THE WEAR AS PRESCRIBED BY THE COMMANDER.
- ◆ THE COAT IS NORMALLY WORN OUTSIDE THE TROUSERS, AND THE TROUSERS ARE WORN WITH A BELT. THE COAT MAY ALSO BE WORN INSIDE THE TROUSERS WHEN DIRECTED BY THE COMMANDER (I.E., WHEN WEARING IBAS, MOPP GEAR, ETC.).
- ◆ THE COAT WILL NOT EXTEND BELOW THE TOP OF THE CARGO POCKET ON THE TROUSERS AND WILL NOT BE HIGHER THAN THE BOTTOM OF THE SIDE POCKET ON THE TROUSERS.
- ◆ THE ELBOW POUCH WITH HOOK AND LOOP CLOSURE FOR INTERNAL ELBOW PAD INSERTS MUST BE CLOSED AT ALL TIMES.



- ◆ PERMANENT INFRARED FEEDBACK SQUARES AFFIXED TO EACH SHOULDER FOR NIGHTTIME IDENTIFICATION WILL BE COVERED WHEN INSIGNIAS ARE NOT WORN ON THE POCKET FLAPS.
- ◆ SLEEVES WILL BE WORN DOWN AT ALL TIMES, AND NOT ROLLED OR CUFFED.
- ◆ THE MOISTURE WICKING TAN T-SHIRT OR COTTON T-SHIRT IS WORN UNDERNEATH THE COAT AND IT IS TUCKED INSIDE THE TROUSERS AT ALL TIMES.
- ◆
- ◆ SOLDIERS WILL WEAR THE TROUSERS TUCKED INTO THE TOP OF THE BOOTS OR BLOUSED USING THE DRAW STRINGS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TROUSERS OR COMMERCIAL BLOUSING DEVICES.
- ◆ PERSONNEL WILL NOT WRAP THE TROUSER LEG AROUND THE LEG TIGHTLY ENOUGH TO PRESENT A PEGGED APPEARANCE OR INSERT ANY ITEMS INSIDE THE TROUSER LEG TO CREATE A ROUND APPEARANCE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TROUSER LEG.
- ◆ WHEN BLOUSED, THE TROUSERS SHOULD NOT EXTEND BELOW THE THIRD EYELET FROM THE TOP OF THE BOOT.
- ◆ THE KNEE POUCH WITH HOOK AND LOOP CLOSURE FOR INTERNAL KNEE PAD INSERTS AND THE BELLOWED CALF STORAGE POCKET WITH HOOK AND LOOP CLOSURE ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT LEGS WILL BE WORN CLOSED AT ALL TIMES.



# Wear of the ACU Uniform

- ◆ **SHOULDER SLEEVE INSIGNIA (SSI) - UNIT PATCH.** THE SSI IS CENTERED ON THE HOOK AND LOOP-FACED PAD ALREADY PROVIDED ON THE LEFT SLEEVE OF THE ACU COAT. (Brigade will not issue USU Patch. You have use Patch and Place Velcro on the back of it.)
- ◆ **SKILL BADGES. PIN ON. SOLDIERS MAY WEAR UP TO FIVE (5) BADGES ON THE ACU. ALL SKILL BADGES WILL BE WORN ABOVE THE U.S. ARMY TAPE. BADGES WILL BE WORN IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE FROM THE WEARER'S LEFT AS FOLLOWS:**
- ◆ **ONE BADGE, WORN 1/8 INCH ABOVE AND CENTERED ON THE U.S. ARMY TAPE. IF YOU HAVE TWO OR MORE BADGES HAVE 1/4 INCH BETWEEN BADGES.**



# Wear of the ACU Uniform

- ◆ **U.S. FLAG INSIGNIA** - THE U.S. FLAG INSIGNIA (FULL COLOR OR SUBDUED) IS WORN ON THE RIGHT SHOULDER POCKET FLAP OF THE ACU COAT. THE FLAG INSIGNIA IS PLACED DIRECTLY ON TOP OF THE HOOK AND LOOP-FACED PAD ALREADY PROVIDED WITH THE ACU COAT SHOULDER POCKET FLAP. THE SUBDUED U.S. FLAG INSIGNIA IS WORN AS DIRECTED BY THE COMMANDER UNDER TACTICAL OR FIELD CONDITIONS.
- ◆ **LAST NAME/U.S. ARMY TAPE** - LAST NAME/U.S. ARMY TAPES ARE 5 INCHES IN LENGTH, HAVE A HOOK AND LOOP-FACED PAD, AND ARE WORN IMMEDIATELY ABOVE AND PARALLEL WITH THE TOP OF THE SLANTED CHEST POCKET FLAPS. THE BACKGROUND OF THE LAST NAME/U.S. ARMY TAPE CAN BE EITHER OLIVE GREEN OR THE UNIVERSAL CAMOUFLAGE PATTERN.



# Wear of ACU Headgear

- ♦ The black beret and other distinctive berets (maroon, tan, green) will be worn in garrison environments unless directed otherwise by the commander. This includes senior and junior ROTC instructors, SMP Cadets, BCT soldiers, and split-option soldiers. Upon return to a BCT environment, split-option soldiers will return to wearing the ACU patrol cap. Soldiers who have not been issued the black beret, or who do not wear the black beret will wear the ACU Patrol Cap instead.
- ♦ The ACU Patrol Cap is worn with the ACU in field environments and when the Kevlar helmet is not worn, on work details, or when the wear of the beret is impractical as determined by the commander. Soldiers will wear the ACU Patrol Cap straight on the head so that the cap band creates a straight line around the head, parallel to the ground. The Patrol Cap will fit snugly and comfortably around the largest part of the head without distortion or excessive gaps. The cap is worn so that no hair is visible on the forehead beneath the cap. Sewn or pin on rank is worn on the ACU Patrol Cap. The last name will be centered on the back of the cap with Velcro fasteners to the Velcro panel that is pre-sewn onto the cap.



# Wear of ACU Headgear (Cont.)

- ♦ The ACU Sun (Boonie) Hat will be worn in field environments when the Kevlar helmet is not worn, or the commander determines it is appropriate to wear. The ACU Sun Hat is typically worn on work details or combat environments where the Kevlar helmet is impractical, as determined by the commander. Sew on and pin on rank are both authorized for wear on the ACU Sun Hat.. The draw string on the ACU Sun Hat can be worn under the chin, around the back of the head and neck, or tucked into the top of the hat. The ACU Sun Hat will not be worn rolled, formed, shaped, blocked, or with an upturned brim.



# Wear of ACU Headgear (Cont.)

- ◆ The Micro Fleece Black Cap is worn with the ACU in field environments when the Kevlar helmet is not worn, on work details, or in other environments where the wear of the beret is impractical, as determined by the commander. The Black Fleece Cap will be pulled down snugly on the head. Soldiers will not roll the edge of the cap.





# Wear of Desert Boots

- ◆ Black boots are NOT authorized for wear with the ACU'S.
- ◆ ACU CURRENT POLICY OF AR 670-1, AUTHORIZING AIRBORNE, AIR ASSAULT, AND MILITARY POLICE PERSONNEL TO WEAR THE ALL-LEATHER, BLACK BOOTS WITH THE SERVICE UNIFORM (CLASS A AND B) REMAINS UNCHANGED.
- ◆ Army Combat Boots - (Hot Weather and temperate weather) made of tan rough side out cattle hide leather with a plain toe and tan rubber outsoles. The boots are laced diagonally with tan laces, with the excess lace tucked into the top of the boot under the bloused trousers, or wrapped around the top side of the boot. Metal cleats and side tabs or sewn in or laced in zippers are not authorized. Only boots with tan rubber outsoles are authorized for wear.

# Corcoran Men's Commercial Desert Boot



Estimated Cost:  
\$99.95

# Belleville Temperate (Gore-Tex) Boot



Estimated Cost: 128.50  
(This IS an issue item)

# Desert Boot Care Kit



Estimated Cost:  
8.00

- ◆ Soldiers may wear commercial boots of a design similar to that of the Army Combat Boot (tan), 8 to 10 inches in height as authorized by the commander. The boots must be made of tan rough side out cattle hide leather, with a plain toe, and have a tan, rubber outsole.
- ◆ NO STEEL TOE!!!!!!



# THE ACU CARE POLICY

- ♦ WASH IN COLD WATER AND MILD DETERGENT CONTAINING NO OPTICAL BRIGHTENERS OR BLEACH. TUMBLE DRY AT LOW HEAT (NOT TO EXCEED 130 DEGREES FARENHEIT). REMOVE IMMEDIATELY FROM THE DRYER AND FOLD FLAT OR PLACE ON A RUSTPROOF HANGER TO ENSURE HEAT FROM THE DRYER DOES NOT SET WRINKLES. TO DRIP DRY, REMOVE FROM THE WASHER/WATER AND PLACE ON A RUSTPROOF HANGER. DO NOT WRING OR TWIST.



# THE ACU CARE POLICY (Cont.)

## **LAUNDERING THE ARMY COMBAT UNIFORM (ACU)**

- ♦ While the ACU comes with a care manual, some items on the laundering instructions are not covered in the manual. On the care label, the instructions are to launder in a mild detergent which does NOT contain “optical brighteners”. No laundry detergent lists whether or not it contains these brighteners. By contacting the individual laundry detergent manufacturers the following list was compiled of detergents which do contain optical brighteners and those which do not:

### **CONTAINS OPTICAL BRIGHTENERS**

Dreft Liquid  
Dreft Powder  
Era Liquid (all versions)  
Gain Liquids (all versions)  
Gain Powders (all versions)  
Ivory Snow Liquid  
Ivory Snow Powder  
Tide Liquids (all versions)  
Tide Powders (all versions)  
Tide Tablets (all versions)  
Fab (all versions)  
Dynamo (all versions)  
Ajax (all versions)



# THE ACU CARE POLICY (Cont.)

## **CONTAINS OPTICAL BRIGHTENERS (Cont.)**

Suavitel Fabric Softener (all versions)

All laundry products made by Colgate-Palmolive  
Arm & Hammer Liquid (all versions)

Arm & Hammer FabriCare Powder (all versions)

Arm & Hammer Fresh 'n Soft Fabric Softener (all versions)  
Arm & Hammer Super Washing Soda

Rain Drops Water Softener and Detergent Booster  
DeliCare Fine Fabric Wash (all versions)

Wisk (all versions)

All Liquid (all versions)

Surf Liquid (all versions)

Yes (all versions)

All Dial Laundry Products including:

Purex Powder (all versions)

Purex Liquid (all versions)

Purex Fabric Softener (all versions)

Purex Baby (all versions)

20 Mule Team Detergent (all versions)  
Zout (all versions)



# THE ACU CARE POLICY (Cont.)

## **DO NOT CONTAIN BRIGHTENERS:**

Bold Powder  
Cheer Liquid (all versions)  
Cheer Powder (all versions)  
All Powder (all versions)  
Surf Powder (all versions)  
Woolite (all versions)

## **QUESTIONABLE CONTENTS (SHOULD PROBABLY AVOID)**

Spray 'n Wash (all versions)  
Calgon (all versions)

**CAUTION:** If using a store brand or "generic", the label usually states "compare to [brand]" on the front panel. Match that to the list above for ingredient content.

Additionally, turning the uniforms inside out while laundering prevents the Velcro from attaching to other items and prolongs the usefulness of the Velcro.



# Where Can I buy the ACU?

- ◆ Available on [www.aafes.com](http://www.aafes.com)
- ◆ US Patriot Store, [www.uspatriotstore.com](http://www.uspatriotstore.com)
- ◆ Streichers Gear, [www.streichers.com](http://www.streichers.com)
- ◆ US CAV, [www.uscav.com](http://www.uscav.com)
- ◆ **Military Clothing.com, [www.militaryclothing.com](http://www.militaryclothing.com) (ACU Nametapes / IFF tabs and patches) - Cheap and it took about 8 days from placing the order till it was at my door step.**
- ◆ Ranger Joe's, [www.rangerjoes.com](http://www.rangerjoes.com)



# How much do the ACU's Cost?

- ◆ AAFES will be selling the ACU for 74.00 a set, or 37.00 per coat / trousers.
- ◆ Commercially, you can buy the official ACU uniform between 36.00 and 49.00
- ◆ The ACU Patrol Cap typically sells anywhere for 7.00-13.00



# Most FAQ:

What is the difference between the ACU's I buy Commercially, and the ACU's I might get issued or, the ACU's I buy from AAFES?



# Answer:

- ◆ There is only 1 difference. The IFF, 1" x 1" squares found on the shoulder flap pockets is not sewn on. You can buy Velcro on IFF squares from any website listed before for about 5 dollars per set. You can then transition these squares between uniforms. Many soldiers are complaining that their IFF tabs melt off in hot conditions – such as placing ACU's in a dryer on the "High Heat" setting. This is the only difference, which is easily correctible by Velcro IFF tabs. These uniforms are still authorized.



# How do I spot an inferior (knock-off) uniform?

- ◆ If buying ACU's online, make sure your ACU's are coming from an official manufacturer (NSN number 8455-01-524-4926).
- ◆ ACU's are made 50% nylon, 50% cotton. All other blends are not official issue.



So, if I were to buy ACU's  
online, how much would  
it cost for the first set?



- ◆ Remember, your first set will be the most expensive. It will include insignia, name tapes, boots, and headgear. Here is a breakdown of the cost of a typical first set of ACU's:
- ◆ Shirt/Pants---74.00
- ◆ Nametapes---10.00
- ◆ Rank---6.00
- ◆ Boots---99.00
- ◆ IFF Flag/Full Color Flag---8.00
- ◆ Headgear---10.00

Total: 215.00

Three More Complete Uniforms: 328.00



# Why is the Uniform So Expensive? Does this make sense?

- ◆ No cost of sewing - ever again
- ◆ No cost for dry cleaning or ironing/starching (none are authorized)
- ◆ Altering uniforms is not authorized, so there is no need to sew pockets on the sleeve while in theatre of operations (combat situations)

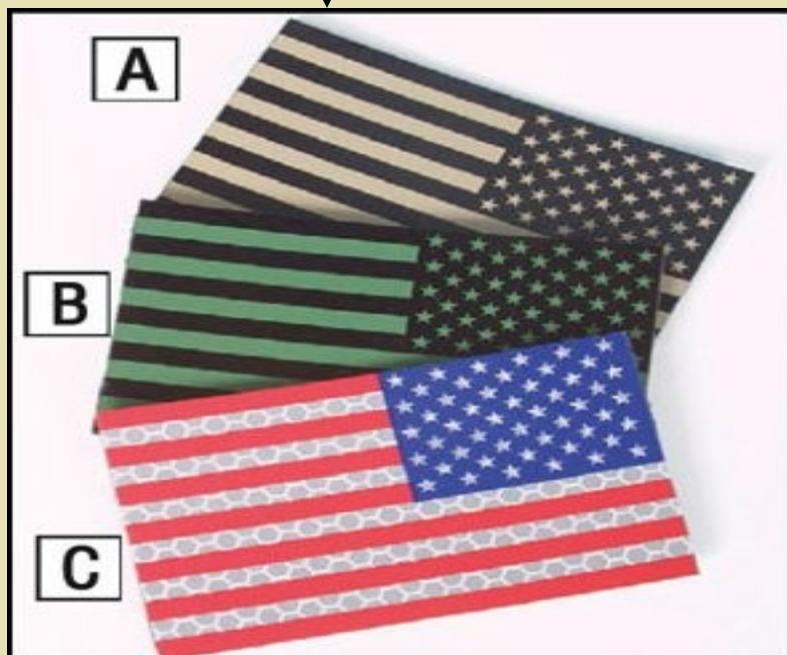


# Items that might confuse you

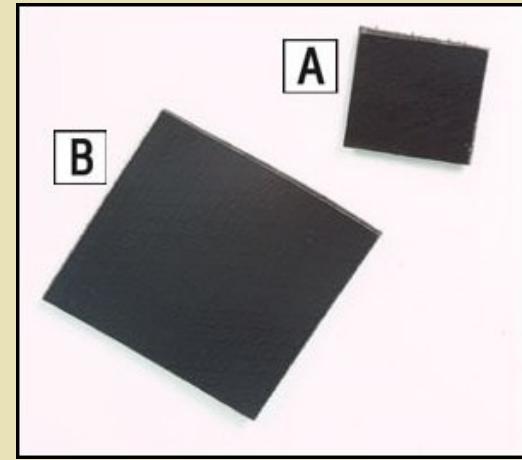


← Don't Need it

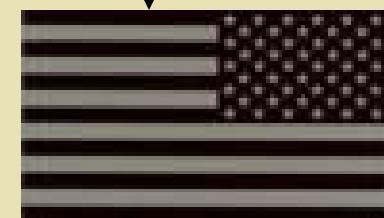
Need it for USU  
Patch



Don't Need it



Don't  
Need it



Need it if you have all OD  
Tabs →





Questions?? Comments??